

Know Before You Go

Numerous recreational opportunities exist for bird watching, hunting, fishing, camping, and boating; however, most of these activities are dependent on the water levels of the lakes which can fluctuate dramatically. Contact the Bureau of Land Management Lakeview District office to receive updated information about current lake levels before planning a trip to the Warner Wetlands.

Geology

Warner Valley was formed when large faults in the earth's crust moved. Portions of the crust, called grabens, moved down, and others, called horsts, moved up, one forming Hart Mountain. A long valley running north and south was formed.

During the last ice age, huge lakes filled the valley with water as much as 200 feet deep. The lakeshore beaches of this event can be seen on the eastern side of the valley below Hart Mountain. By approximately 10,000 years ago, the ice age lake had dried up. The remnants of Hart Lake remain today as a complex chain of lakes approximately 40 miles long that are separated by a unique series of bow-shaped dunes.

Hydrologic Cycle

The amount of water in the lakes is determined primarily by the volume of snowmelt and rain. Enough precipitation needs to occur in the basin to fill Crump Lake high enough so the overflow fills Hart Lake and the overflow from Hart Lake fills the lakes to the north. With an evaporation rate of as much as 42 inches per year, the water levels of all the lakes can fluctuate widely from one year to the next.

Recreation Opportunities

Facilities

Recreation facilities include the Hart Bar Interpretive Site, Warner Valley Overlook, and a marked canoe trail. Hart Bar Interpretive Site has restrooms, a sheltered picnic table, interpretive panels, and a 0.25 mile hiking trail to wildlife viewing blinds. The Warner Valley Overlook affords a panoramic overview of the wetlands with the desert buttes to the west and south, and interpretive panels along a short hike to the overlook.

Bird Watching

During the spring and fall months, lesser Sandhill cranes, American bald eagles, American bitterns, black-necked stilts, white-faced ibis, and tundra swans are a few of the myriad bird species you may encounter in the wetlands. It is possible to view birds from any of the roadways around the lakes and viewing blinds at Hart Bar.

Fishing

Crappie, smallmouth bass, and bullhead fishing is a popular pastime for late spring and summer anglers. Hart Lake provides fishing opportunities during dry cycle periods as well as wet. The Warner Sucker, an endangered species endemic to the Warner Valley, must be released if caught. It is the only sucker species in the Warner Valley.

Camping

Although there are no developed campgrounds, the area is open for dispersed camping. Please keep your vehicle on routes posted "open." Visitors should bring all necessary camp gear and water with them. Areas exist along the lake shores for both tents and RVs. The nearest campground is located on Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge.

Boating/Canoeing

During wet years, a ten-mile canoe trail for experienced paddlers is marked in the channels between Campbell, Turpin, and Stone Corral Lakes. Hart Lake is available for boating even during low water years.

Off-Highway Vehicle Use

All motorized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails which are posted as "open." During wet years, many of these roads may be flooded and impassable.

Directions to the Site

From Lakeview, Oregon, travel north on U.S. Highway 395 for six miles, and turn east on Highway 140 for approximately 14 miles to County Road 3-13, known locally as the Plush Cutoff Road. Travel on this road for 15 miles to Plush, Oregon. From Plush, travel north for 0.8 miles, and turn east on County Road 3-12. Drive approximately four miles to the Hart Bar Interpretive Site, located at the base of Hart Mountain.

District Contact Information

Lakeview District

Lakeview Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
1301 South G Street
Lakeview, OR 97630

(541) 947-2177

www.or.blm.gov/lakeview

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Warner Wetlands

Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Lakeview District



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Welcome to Warner Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Welcome to the Warner Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern, a 52,033-acre area of pothole lakes along the base of Hart Mountain in southeastern Oregon. This wetlands habitat is critical for the thousands of migrating birds, fish such as the Warner sucker, crappie, smallmouth bass, and the many other plant and wildlife species dependent on these wetlands surrounded by high desert.

